

Message Text

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IGA-02 AGR-20 DRC-01 SR-02 ORM-03 MC-02 ACDA-19 /263 W

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P R 031145Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7552

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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USIA WASHDC

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AMCONSUL UDORN

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III MAF
CINCPACAF
CTG SEVEN NINE PT FOUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PHNOM PENH 11769

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, MOPS, ECON, CB
SUBJECT: KHMER REPORT-- SEPTEMBER 3, 1974

GENERAL

1. MILITANT PHNOM PENH TEACHERS ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY THIS WEEK TO FORCE THE GKR TO ACCEDE TO THEIR DEMANDS BY THREATENING TO GO ON STRIKE DURING THE EXAMINATION PERIOD. THE MAJORITY OF TEACHERS, HOWEVER, REJECTED THIS APPROACH AND THE EXAMINATIONS ARE PROCEEDING ON SCHEDULE. A MILITARY TRIBUNAL HANDED DOWN SENTENCES AGAINST THOSE IMPLICATED IN THE JUNE 4 ASSASSINATIONS OF TWO HIGH-RANKING GKR OFFICIALS; THE SENTENCES INCLUDED DEATH IN ABSENTIA FOR THE PRESUMED ASSASSIN AND AN ACCOMPLICE, AND SUSPENDED SENTENCES FOR OTHER STUDENTS. PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET MOVED ON TO JORDAN FROM SAUDI ARABIA IN HIS CONTINUED EFFORTS TO WIN ARAB SUPPORT PRIOR TO THE FALL UNGA SESSION WHILE GRUNK/FUNK IN-COUNTRY PROPAGANDA ASSERTED THE OTHER SIDE' CLAIM TO BE A "LEGITIMATE STATE". ON THE BATTLEFIELD, FANK MADE GOOD HEADWAY IN THE BASSAC CORRIDOR SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH AND SHOWED COMMENDABLE INITIATIVE IN THE SIEM
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REAP AREA AS WELL. HOWEVER, THE ENEMY CONTINUED TO THREATEN KY OUTPOSTS ON ROUTE 4, AND KC TROOPS CONTINUED THEIR LOW LEVEL BUT STEADY HARASSMENT OF SMALL FANK POSITIONS IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE.

POLITICAL(INTERNAL)

2. OPPOSITIONIST TEACHER LEADERS ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESS-

FULLY THIS WEEK TO FORCE THE GKR TO ACCEDE TO THEIR DEMANDS BY THREATENING DISRUPTION OF THE END-OF-YEAR LYCE EXAMINATIONS. THE TEACHERS STRIKE COMMITTEE ISSUED A DECLARATION AUGUST 26 SAYING THAT TEACHERS WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE AUGUST 29 EXAMINATIONS FOR THE "DIPLOME" UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT RELEASED SEVEN STUDENTS STILL UNDER DETENTION AND RESCINDED THE ORDER REASSIGNING TWO TEACHER ACTIVISTS TO THE PROVINCES (SEE LAST WEEK'S KHMER REPORT). THE GKR STOOD FIRM, HOWEVER, AND ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME ABSENCES AND DELAYS, THE MAJORITY OF TEACHER-EXAMINERS DID SHOW UP SO THAT BY AND LARGE THE EXAMINATIONS PROCEEDED NORMALLY. THIS WAS DUE IN PART ALSO TO THE GKR DECISION TO USE TEACHERS ASSIMILATED INTO THE ARMY TO REPLACE ABSENTEES. BACCALAUREAT EXAMINATIONS STARTED SEPTEMBER 2 AND THEY TOO AT THE MOMENT APPEAR TO BE PROCEEDING NORMALLY. COMMENT: THE PROTESTERS EVIDENTLY UNDERESTIMATED THE DESIRE OF THE STUDENTS TO FINISH THEIR EXAMS UNIMPEDED, AND THE SYMPATHY OF THE MAJORITY OF TEACHERS WITH THEM IN THIS WISH. END COMMENT.

3. ON SEPTEMBER 1, THE GKR ANNOUNCED OVER NATIONAL RADIO THAT THE PHNOM PENH MILITARY TRIBUNAL HAD HANDED DOWN SENTENCES ON THOSE PERSONS IMPLICATED IN THE JUNE 4 ASSASSINATIONS OF MINISTER OF EDUCATION KEO SANGKIM AND PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR THACH CHIA. THE BRIEF COMMUNIQUE STRESSED THAT THE TRIBUNAL HAD CONDUCTED AN EXHAUSTIVE INVESTIGATION AND THAT ITS DECISIONS WERE TAKEN IN STRICT CONFORMITY WITH EXISTING JUDICIAL PROCEDURES AND LAWS. THE ALLEGED ASSASSIN OF THE TWO OFFICIALS, STUDENT THUCH SAU KHY, AND ANOTHER STUDENT, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE DISAPPEARED, WERE SENTENCED TO DEATH IN ABSENTIA. SENTENCES WERE ALSO CONFIDENTIAL

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HANDED DOWN ON SOME FIFTEEN OTHER PERSONS IMPLICATED IN THE AFFAIR, INCLUDING STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND AT LEAST ONE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. SENTENCES RANGED FROM LIFE IMPRISONMENT THROUGH TWENTY TO FIVE YEARS AT HARD LABOR, WITH FOUR SUSPECTS ACQUITTED. AMONG THOSE SENTENCED WERE THE SEVEN STUDENTS REFERRED TO IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH; MOST, HOWEVER, RECEIVED SUSPENDED FIVE YEAR SENTENCES. COMMENT: HARD-CORE STUDENT/TEACHER OPPOSITIONISTS HAVE ALREADY DEMANDED THE UNCONDITIONAL LIBERATION OF THE SEVEN STUDENTS AND THUS WILL BE UNHAPPY WITH THE TRIBUNAL DECISION. THE MORE GENERAL

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P R 031145Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7553

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 PHNOM PENH 11769

REACTION WILL DEPEND ON THE WAY THE GKR EXPLAINS ITS DECISIONS FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION. THERE IS ALSO A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT PRESIDENT LON NOL WILL SEE FIT, AS HE HAS SEVERAL TIMES RECENTLY, TO GRANT CLEMENCY TO SOME OF THE CONVICTED PERSONS. END COMMENT.

POLITICAL (EXTERNAL)

4. PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET REMAINED IN THE MIDDLE EAST THIS WEEK CONTINUING HIS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE GKR RELATIONS WITH CERTAIN ARAB NATIONS PRIOR TO THE UNGA SESSION THIS FALL. HE SPENT FIVE DAYS IN SAUDI ARABIA, DURING WHICH TIME HE MET WITH KING FEISAL, AND ON AUGUST 30 DEPARTED FOR JORDAN.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM PAID A RETURN VISIT TO THE IVORY COAST AFTER COMPLETING HIS STAY IN LIBERIA (SEE LAST WEEK'S KHMER REPORT). IN ABIDJAN LIM CONFERRED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ARSENE USHER ASSOUAN, WHO TOLD HIM THAT THE IVORY COAST WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE GKR AT THE UN.

6. THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD POPULATION
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CONFERENCE IN BUCHAREST AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ADOPTED IN ITS REPORT A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE CREDENTIALS OF ALL REPRESENTATIVES AT THE CONFERENCE, BUT NOTING THE OBJECTIONS OF SOME COUNTRIES (PRC, SENEGAL, TANZANIA) TO THE GKR PRESENCE. DESPITE

THREATS OF FIREWORKS BY GRUNK SUPPORTERS, THE AUGUST 30
PLENARY SESSION ADOPTED THE COMMITTEE REPORT UNANIMOUSLY
WITHOUT COMMENT.

7. THAI PRIME MINISTER SANYA IS REPORTED IN THE
BANGKOK PRESS AS HAVING TOLD A GROUP OF LEGISLATORS THAT
THE CAMBODIAN BORDER REPRESENTS THE GRAVEST THREAT AT
PRESENT TO THAI SECURITY, AND THAT IF THE KC TOPPLE THE
LON NOL GOVERNMENT, THEN THAILAND WOULD BE IN "GREAT
DANGER".

8. SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF NATIONAL
DEFENSE GENERAL THAPPANA NGINN REPRESENTED THE GKR AT
THE FUNERAL CEREMONIES FOR MRS. PARK CHUNG HEE. WHILE
IN SEOUL, THE GENERAL WAS RECEIVED BY THE KOREAN
PRESIDENT.

GRUNK/FUNK

9. RECENT COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA HAS EMPHASIZED THE THEME
THAT GRUNK/FUNK INSTITUTIONS ARE THE ONLY LEGITIMATE
AND MEANINGFUL ONES IN CAMBODIA. ONE SUCH RADIO
BROADCAST WENT INTO CONSIDERABLE DETAIL, ALLEGING THAT
THE LIBERATED ZONE IS A COMPLETELY SOVEREIGN "LEGITI-
MATE STATE" REplete WITH "WELL ESTABLISHED" ORGANIZA-
TIONS AND "COMPETENT MINISTRIES AND REVOLUTIONARY
DEPARTMENTS JUST AS IN OTHER MODERN CIVILIZED COUN-
TRIES...". THE BROADCAST WENT ON TO SPOUT THE USUAL
HYPERBOLE THAT THE KC CONTROL MORE THAN NINETY PERCENT OF CAM-
BODIAN TERRITORY AND MORE THAN EIGHTY-FIVE
PERCENT OF THE POPULATION AND TO ASSERT THAT FUNK'S
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, TRANSPORT AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS
ARE MAKING GREAT PROGRESS IN SERVING THE PEOPLE. TO
HIGHLIGHT THIS ALLEGEDLY EFFECTIVE KC ADMINISTRATION
OF ITS AREAS OF CONTROL, THERE ARE ALSO PERIODIC
DESCRIPTIONS OF LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS IN SPECIFIC AREAS
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"UNDER FUNK GUIDANCE".

10. DURING THE WEEK, FUNK RADIO ALSO SEVERAL TIMES
PREDICTED ITS SIDE'S "COMPLETE VICTORY IN THE NEAR
FUTURE"; DESCRIBED THE DETERIORATION OVER THE PAST
YEAR OF FUNK'S ABILITY TO CONTROL AND USE STRATEGIC
LINES OF COMMUNICATION, TO THE POINT THAT THE GKR IS
NOW TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON THE MEKONG AND THE TONLE
SAP; CLAIMED THAT SINCE "CONGRESS HAS REDUCED BY HALF"
AID TO CAMBODIA, THE GKR WILL "SURELY PASS AWAY"; AND
IN AN EVEN MORE WARPED PERSPECTIVE THAN USUAL
ACCUSED REPRESENTATIVES OF A JAPANESE BUDDHIST SECT

WHO ARE IN PHNOM PENH TO DISCUSS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
OF BEING AN UNDERCOVER INTELLIGENCE GROUP WORKING IN
CONCERT WITH THE CIA TO MISLEAD CAMBODIAN MONKS
AND TURN THEM INTO SPIES.

11. AKI HAILED THE 29TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF
THE DRV AND PROMISED, AS A GESTURE OF "MILITANT
SOLIDARITY "WITH THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, THAT THERE
WILL BE "NO COMPROMISE OR RETREAT" BY THE CAMBODIANS.
SIHANOUK SENT HIS CONGRATULATIONS TO HANOI AS WELL.
IN OTHER MESSAGES, HE PRAISED QATAR AND LIBYA ON
THEIR NATIONAL DAYS, AND CABLED THE PRESIDENT OF
CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE ON THE OCCASION OF THE "SUMMIT CON-
FERENCE OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES".

ECONOMIC

12. RICE PRICES WERE UNCHANGED AND BEEF , PORK AND
CITRUS FRUITS SHOWED MODERATE DECLINES, BUT THE
PRICES OF MOST OTHER MAJOR RETAIL GOODS SOLD IN PHNOM
PENH MARKETS INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY DURING THE WEEK.
FRESH VEGETABLES, SUCH AS TOMATOES, MANIOC, GREEN
BEANS, STRING BEANS, CAULIFLOWER AND CABBAGE, WERE UP
BY TWENTY TO TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT. SUGAR ROSE SEVEN-
TEEN PERCENT AND WAS GENERALLY IN SHORT SUPPLY.

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CIGARETTES WERE UP TWENTY-SIX PERCENT, AND FRESH
WATER FISH PRICES INCREASED TWENTY-SEVEN PERCENT.
IN ADDITION TO SEASONAL FACTORS, THE HIGHER PRICES
ARE ALSO CAUSED BY INCREASED BUYING IN PREPARATION FOR
A MAJOR KHMER RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY IN MID-SEPTEMBER. THE

BLACK MARKET EXCHANGE RATE CLOSED AT 1,210 RIELS
PER DOLLAR, COMPARED TO 1,150 AT THE START OF THE WEEK.

13. RICE STOCKS ON HAND IN PHNOM PENH ON SEPTEMBER 1,
1974 TOTALLED 39.5 THOUSAND TONS OR A 51-DAY SUPPLY
AT THE OFFICIAL DAILY DISTRIBUTION RATE OF 770 TONS.
NO ARRIVALS WERE REPORTED DURING THE WEEK. NEGOTIATIONS
ARE UNDERWAY WITH THE GVN FOR A LOAN OF 40 THOUSAND TONS
OF RICE TO COVER A PORTION OF THE PERIOD PRIOR TO
INITIAL DELIVERIES OF RICE UNDER THE FY 1975 PL 480
AGREEMENT.

14. A USAID-CHARTERED TUG AND BARGE ARE SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN
PHNOM PENH IN THE NEXT CONVOY FROM KOMPONG SOM CARRYING
1,693 TONS OF CARGO, INCLUDING AMONG OTHER THINGS,
SALT, WET RICE AND PAPER PRODUCTS TO BE FOLLOWED BY AN-
OTHER SHIPMENT IN A SUBSEQUENT CONVOY CARRYING SALT AND
LUMBER. ON THE TONLE SAP, THREE TUGS
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AND FIVE BARGES CHARTERED BY USAID ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH SEPT-
EMBER 1 FROM KOMPONG CHHNANG CARRYING A CARGO OF RICE AND RICE
BRAN FROM BATTAMBANG.

15. VARIOUS PROVINCIAL AREAS HAVE REPORTED REFUGEE
MOVEMENTS RECENTLY. NEAR SIEM REAP ALONG ROUTE 6,
COMMUNIST MILITARY ACTIVITY HAS GENERATED 800 REFUGEES
WHO ARE RECEIVING EMERGENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FROM
CARE. THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE IS PLANNING TO
CONSTRUCT HOUSING. SOME 6,000 NEW REFUGEES HAVE ARRIVED
IN PURSAT RECENTLY AS A RESULT OF MILITARY OPERATIONS AND THE
TOTAL MAY SOON APPROACH 10,000. CARE IS HANDLING THE DISTRIBUTION
OF FOOD AND COMMODITIES AND IS CONTRACTING FOR HOUSING AS WELL.
WORLD VISION IS PLANNING TO SEND A MEDICAL TEAM TO THE AREA
IN VIEW OF SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG THE REFUGEES THERE.

MILITARY

16. THE ONGOING FANK MULTI-BRIGADE OFFENSIVE IN THE
AREA SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH MADE CONSIDERABLY BETTER
PROGRESS THIS WEEK THAN LAST, AS GOVERNMENT FORCES MOV-
ING SOUTHWEST SECURED OBJECTIVES ALONG THE BASSAC AND BE-
GAN FORMING A NEW DEFENSIVE LINE BETWEEN THE RIVER AND
ROUTE 1. UNITS ATTEMPTING TO MOVE EAST ALONG THE BASSAC
ALSO MADE PROGRESS BUT WERE HAMPERED BY FLOODING WATERS,
DIFFICULT TERRAIN AND STIFF ENEMY RESISTANCE. ELSEWHERE
IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA, THE KC ATTACKED SOME 20 KILOMETERS
WEST OF THE CAPITAL, FORCING TWO OUTPOSTS TO WITHDRAW;

HOWEVER, FANK RETOOK THE POSITIONS AND AT THE END OF THE WEEK WAS EXPANDING ITS DEFENSIVE PERIMTER IN THE AREA. THE KC FIRED ONE 122MM ROCKET AT THE KANTOUK AMMO DEPOT WEST OF PHNOM PENH, BUT THE ROCKET MISSED THE TARGET AND CAUSED NO DAMAGE.

17. IN NORTHWESTERN CAMBODIA, FANK FORCES ARE CONSOLIDATING THEIR POSITIONS SOUTHEAST OF SIEM REAP AFTER HAVING MOVED OUT AND TAKEN THE ENEMY BY SURPRISE. THEIR INTENTION IS TO HOLD THIS AREA, COVERING AN ESTIMATED FIFTY SQUARE KILOMETERS OF RICH RICE LAND, TO RESETTLE
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IT AND TO INTERDICT ENEMY SUPPLY ROUTES. SOME 700 TONS OF RICE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SEIZED IN THE COURSE OF THE OPERATION. THE AREA HAS CONSIDERABLE RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, IN ADDITION TO ITS STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE. NEAR BATTAMBANG, THE SITUATION WAS LESS ENCOURAGING, AS THE POSITION OF KOH KRALOR REMAINED ENCIRCLED AND THE FANK RELIEF OPERATION WAS MAKING LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS. ELSEWHERE IN THE PROVINCE, ENEMY FORCES ARE CONTINUING TO HARASS AND OVERRUN SMALL GOVERNMENT OUTPOSTS.

18. THE SITUATION ALONG ROUTE 4 DETERIORATED FURTHER DURING THE WEEK AS COMMUNIST FORCES SEIZED CONTROL OF AN EIGHT KILOMETER SECTION OF THE ROAD EAST OF THE BESIEGED GARRISON OF DAS KANCHOR. HOWEVER, BY THE END OF THE WEEK, FANK HAD STABILIZED THE SITUATION SOMEWHAT, WAS ATTEMPTING TO RETAKE THE POSITIONS THAT HAD BEEN LOST AND REOPEN THE ROAD BETWEEN KOMPONG SPEU AND DAS KANCHOR. FURTHER SOUTH ALONG ROUTE 4, THE OUTPOST OF KOMPONG SEILA CONTINUED TO RECEIVE DAILY GROUND ATTACKS AND ATTACKS BY FIRE.

19. A MEKONG CONVOY ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH ON SEPTEMBER 2. TWO CARGO SHIPS AND ONE CARRYING POL WERE HIT BY ENEMY FIRE EN ROUTE BUT THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES OR SERIOUS MATERIEL DAMAGE.

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